

Town of Burrillville
Goals & Objectives and Public Policy
Legislative Agenda – 2007/2008

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - POLICY DECISION

New Programs (added 2007)

1. The Town Manager's highest priority for non-administrative functions is to promote economic development and redevelopment programs.

PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

Ongoing Programs

1. Spring Lake Beach – develop options for the disposition of the storage building/apartment.
2. Youth outdoor ice skating facilities – identify locations for low cost/low maintenance facilities.
3. Look into options to use Town/School owned land for additional playing fields for recreational and school use.
4. Develop a master plan for a multi-town walking trails/bike path(s) with the Town Planner. Consider use of Town-owned and other rights-of-way and "paper" streets.
5. Develop a plan for use of Town owned land behind the Police Station.
 - Playing Fields; or
 - Potential relocation of Department of Public Works
6. Develop a plan to utilize land and/or acquire land contiguous to the Beckwith-Bruckshaw Memorial Lodge.
7. Coordinate a town-wide evaluation of recreation and school sports needs, identify available land for purchase and/or development of related facilities, formulate plans to acquire, develop and fund these facilities.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Opposition to changes in the recreation use immunity statute (§32-6)
2. Improvements to the Shippee Bridge area.
3. Plan for acquisition of RR ROW between Harrisville and Pascoag. Start Planning for use and funding of the selected use.
4. Winterization of Champlin Recreation Hall (Spring Lake Beach)

5. Renovations – Spring Lake Beach Guard House
6. Teen Center

RECREATION & SENIOR PROGRAMS

Ongoing Programs

1. Expand general recreation programs for the elderly/handicapped.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. The committee appointed by the Council to consider options for a senior center has made a presentation to the Council. It's the Council's decision as to what process to follow going forward. It appears that the Senior Committee would like to form a new group to pursue more defined options.

BUILDINGS AND TOWN FACILITIES

Ongoing Programs

1. Assembly Building –Board of Administration to develop a Capital Plan.
b) improve exterior signage
2. Support renovation of town owned "laundromat" in downtown Pascoag.
3. Determine options for the utilization of the existing Smith Library building once the new library location is finalized. Decide on the use of the facility and fund the renovations in the upcoming budget and/or prior to March 2008.
4. Consider options to manage the rink, including a short and long-term capital program with revenue projections. One option should be to consider hiring a professional management company or professional manager for the rink once the renovation is complete.
5. Identify Town, School, Sewer, etc. building (facility) needs and develop a long-term plan to meet those needs.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. The architect designing the Clock Tower renovation needs direction on what use will be considered for the ±10,000 square foot that is town owned and previously designated for community space.

Community space has been incorporated into the Clock Tower project. As of this time, there is no cost to the town. We may have to expend funds in the future to renovate or accommodate whatever use(s) the Council wants in the designated area. The Senior Center should be strongly considered as one of the potential uses for this space. As WNDC is developing its building program and budget, they will need some direction on this project component relatively soon. The Recreation Department and Redevelopment Agency are looking into alternatives for the space as well. This is also an option for the community space that may be designed into the Clock Tower building.

2. Consider options to relocate the Public Works facility.
3. Address police station (building) issues
 - Storage/space issues
 - Schedule Council tour of police station and other town buildings
4. Implement the plan to renovate the Levy Community Rink

PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Ongoing Programs

1. Maintain and continually update the short and long-term capital program for sidewalk, road, bridge and drainage improvements, construction and reconstruction.
2. Implement and maintain the pavement management program as a functional management-planning tool – integrate with the GIS program and five (5) year capital program.
3. Develop a plan to replace or erect new signs throughout town (streets, villages, town entranceways, traffic control).
4. East Avenue and Route 107 reconstruction – state projects to be coordinated with the Town.
5. Stormwater Phase II programs being prepared and implemented in compliance with Federal and State requirements.
6. Replace granite town boundary markers at all key road entrances into town.
7. Work with local groups such as the Garden Club to expand and promote the Adopt a Spot program and other beautification projects.

8. Update and maintain the bridge maintenance program.
9. Town-wide recycling goal of 25% by fiscal year 2008 and 30% by 2010 (diversion goals).
10. Consider expansion of Town Engineer Responsibilities – re: sewer civil engineering services as an example.
11. Implement infrastructure improvements; Sayles Avenue.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. The most significant regulatory matter is the improperly closed/capped landfill proximate to Whipple Avenue.
2. Discuss options to consider adding rubbish/recycling services to many of those areas in the community currently not receiving these services.
3. Bridge #378 – RIDOT recently lowered the rating on this bridge to a maximum of five (5) tons. This severely restricts truck traffic across this bridge. The Council approved up to \$150,000 for design services. In March 2007, DOT approved the bridge project.
4. Mapleville Main St. improvements. Sidewalk, park and road plans are being considered, based on a public meeting held in October 2006. Options will be further developed and ultimately presented in the FY2009 capital budget.
5. Dam Safety Program
6. Whipple Avenue Landfill Closure
7. The State has lowered the rating on Shippee Bridge (Sherman Farm Road); Town to try and expedite repairs or replacement of this State-owned bridge.
8. Consider establishing a dam management district for the Pascoag Reservoir.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Ongoing Programs

1. Council Members and Public Works Managers/Supervisors to provide the Town Manager with ideas for neighborhood beautification or improvement projects for the Capital and operating budgets.

2. Add funds on an incremental basis to the annual public works operating budget (from the tax levy) for road and capital projects. Target goal is to establish an annual budget of \$300,000 to \$500,000 per year to replace the potential loss of Ocean State Power capital funds. Increases will be planned to coincide with the termination schedule of the OSP Pilot Agreement

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Amendments to the Capital/Infrastructure Programs to include village centers; sidewalks, connectivity between key areas of the Town and physical improvements in the village centers need to be addressed in lieu of all capital funds being allocated to roadways.

PLANNING AND ZONING

Ongoing Programs

1. Review and change subdivision regulations/standards and consider related ordinances as necessary.
2. Coordinate the planning department's basic planning and economic development activities with the Private Land Trust, Recreation Department and Redevelopment Agency.
3. Implement the elements and goals of the Route 102 Development Study and Redevelopment agency redevelopment districts .

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Review and consider Conservation Design Zoning
 - a. Rural areas
 - b. Village centers

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ongoing Programs

1. Affordable housing has the potential to be a very significant issue for the town. Burrillville has many acres of vacant land that can be targeted by developers intent on taking advantage of the existing laws allowing comprehensive permits.

Take whatever measures are necessary to slow down or prohibit private

developers from using comprehensive permits that do not comport with the comprehensive and affordable housing plans.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Add building renovation as an option to the Town's Affordable Housing proposal. Renovation of substandard housing units in the community in lieu of money or donation of land (as is the traditional approach).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – NEW BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Ongoing Programs

1. Identify, target, prioritize and rezone areas of Town for new industrial/commercial growth and protection of rural and open space areas.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Daniele Proscuitto
 - Potential expansion; issues related to Waste Water Treatment
 - Noise Reduction at the existing plant and any expansions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – REDEVELOPMENT

Ongoing Programs

1. Working with the Redevelopment Agency, support (politically and financially) the various implementation plan(s) [Stillwater and Pascoag].
2. Stillwater Mills – support redevelopment of the clock tower building and other available properties within the complex.
3. Develop a new (revised) land acquisition program to complement redevelopment initiatives, open space and conservation goals, and our Municipal space needs (Town/School facilities – short and long term).
4. Actively look to acquire land in the Downtown Pascoag area to support the Downtown Pascoag programs, i.e. the Riverwalk & Greenway project and to promote/encourage quality redevelopment.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Expand the role of the Chamber of Commerce into town affairs.

LAND PRESERVATION / LAND ACQUISITION

Ongoing Programs

1. Work with the Land Trust and Conservation Commission to identify and prioritize parcels of land for future acquisition and preservation.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Inventory town-owned property and develop a policy for their use.
2. Long-term plan to acquire land proximate to Route 102.

BUILDING OFFICIAL AND ZONING BOARD

Ongoing Programs

1. Develop a short and long-term staffing plan for the Department.
2. Continued attention to minimum housing needs and related programs.

New Programs

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Ongoing Programs

1. Responsible debt management and maintenance of a 12% (approximate) fund balance. **Note:** Charter requires five (5) percent.
2. Responsible, affordable budgets.
3. Commit to long term financial planning (not just capital planning).
4. Build the major capital improvement fund.
5. Build the Land Acquisition/Open Space Capital Fund
6. Build the unfunded Liability Fund.
7. Build the Redevelopment Agency Fund.

8. Consider options for tax takings for targeted properties – Finance Director to create a list of all properties and prioritize that list.
9. Develop and implement an accounting standards/procedures manual.
10. Address all issues identified in the audit management letter – develop an implementation plan and schedule to correct/address items identified.
11. Develop a council policy or ordinance for charging prior year taxes for missed assessments and/or unassessed property and structures. (This may require special legislation.) **NOTE:** This item was tabled indefinitely by the last Town Council.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Consider stepping up shift of tax allocations to pay down the debt reduction program – a by-product of S3050.
2. Consider establishing a separate fund to pay the Town's share of deductibles and/or to offset excessive rate increases. Incorporate the schools when they change their Health Insurance programs.
3. Establish a process, procedure and a revolving fund for handling all medical pay-outs under the new medical plan (Plan 500).
4. Finalization/Determination regarding the feasibility of utilization of credit card services for tax collections and other areas.

TAX ASSESSING OFFICE

Ongoing Programs

1. Policies and Procedure Manual needs to be updated and completed.

New Programs:

POLICE/PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAMS

Ongoing Programs

1. Continue to evaluate ongoing and consider new progressive community based police programs. In conjunction with the on-going community and

other service programs, specifically add components to integrate community policing into the schools and for the elderly/disabled.

Community Policing: The following Community Policing programs are ongoing and will be changed/modified as needed to accommodate changing community needs

- Citizens Police Academy
 - Ride-along program
 - Junior Achievement program
 - Police Station tours
 - Citizens Awards
 - Community Policing at Spring Lake Beach and other parks & recreation areas
 - Senior Citizen Programs
 - Downtown Pascoag Substation
 - Walking beats in selected areas of town
2. Enhance and coordinate our training programs to promote maximum flexibility within the department.
 3. Continued support and improvement for the Municipal Court services.
 4. Evaluate and consider the departments service programs to accommodate the Town wide need.
 5. Work with Emergency Management coordinator and other town emergency providers, utilities and schools to prepare emergency contingency plans for non-traditional emergencies (i.e. – terrorists, environment, school and contamination of public utilities).
 6. Review and evaluate effectiveness of the Juvenile Hearing Board. Look at options to improve.
 7. Establish Homeland Security Mutual Aid agreements to include abutting Rhode Island towns and towns in the neighboring states of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Consider including expansion of police headquarters in long-term CIP program.
2. Expand and enclose existing parking area to secure seized equipment and vehicles.
3. Revitalizing special response team.

4. Consider reviewing scheduling practices for possible reductions in police overtime.

TOWN CLERK

Ongoing Programs

1. Integrate technology and public access to departmental services using technology.
2. Establish a long-term schedule for conversion of historic documents, utilizing funds from the technology/historic records funds reserved from recording fees.

New Programs

TOWN COUNCIL

Ongoing Programs

1. Council to work with the Sewer Commission on timing/scheduling/prioritizing future capital projects and the most advantageous way of financing and sharing costs for those projects.
2. Initiate a dialog with Ocean State Power to consider extension of the tax agreement. Initiate contact with the parent company and see whether or not it is feasible to begin talks to extend the existing contract or to negotiate a new contract. The administration should hire a qualified appraisal firm to establish the value of the plant and its facilities, etc. so we have a basis to evaluate the correct course of action when we begin formal negotiations. Once the base line appraisal is established it should be updated at least every two (2) years. This will probably be expensive but it will give us options and very important information to use in negotiations.
3. Institute a program for Town Council members to tour/inspect all Town buildings and facilities, including the schools.
4. Establish a regular, on-going dialog with the School Committee.
5. Meet with School Committee to go over short/long range planning for improving education, tied to the prospective budgets?

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Review impact of RI joining “Greenhouse Gas Pact” as it may impact revenue generated from Ocean State Power.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Ongoing Programs

1. Work with Police Department and other Town Emergency service providers and utilities to prepare emergency contingency plans for non-traditional emergencies, i.e. – terrorists, environment and public utility contamination.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Consider needs and resources to accomplish the mandates of State and Federal government.
2. Acquire Buck Hill property and tower and install state-of-the-art communications system.

INFORMATION SERVICES

Ongoing Programs

1. Provide short and long-term training programs for division’s management personnel.
2. Provide in-house training programs for the staff (management and clerical).
3. Continued enhancement of the website and E-government services. Improve the availability of e-government departmental services by providing services through the Town’s website.
4. Upgrade the GIS database and CAMA database and make accessible through the Internet.
5. Fully evaluate and report on the current status of the Town website and e-government. Submit a plan to continue improvement of these services.

New Programs

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Ongoing Programs

1. Develop and implement an employee handbook.
2. Consider hiring a consultant to write, coordinate and rewrite personnel and benefits documents, policies/procedures and protocols.
3. Centralize personnel records system – create an electronic database to compliment our hard copy files.
4. Centralize purchasing and risk management functions (long term objective); to allow fire departments, sewer department, utility district, housing authority and school department to purchase the goods/services at the rates entered into by the Town.
5. Coordinate a program to sell Town owned parcels that are not of use to the Town (short or long-term).
6. Working closely with the State DEM to monitor and coordinate the Pascoag MTBE cleanup project and planning to bring the drinking wells back on line.
7. 15%-20% target within 2 budget cycles for reductions in organizational health care premiums (town, school, sewer, etc.). Combinations of wage controls and benefit premium reductions are also possible as an alternative. **Note:** the town cannot control the cost of health care, only the net premium costs and this is subject to union negotiations.
8. Offer to facilitate the merger of Harrisville and Pascoag Water Districts

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Discuss with legislators the status of the Pascoag MTBE cleanup project and planning to bring the drinking wells back on line.
2. Staffing for Jesse M. Smith Library needs to be incorporated into the Classification Plan along with related logistics.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Ongoing Programs

1. Maintain the staff's involvement with statewide organizations and professional associations.

2. Develop working relationships with surrounding Towns to see if shared/coordinated services, staff, etc. may make sense. E.g.: Human Services, Planning/Economic development, projects such as bike paths, walking trails, recycling and other subservices of the Operating Departments' duties and responsibilities.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ongoing Programs

1. To generally support the School Department's internal goals by carefully reviewing the annual budget request and by reviewing the schools' short-term financial planning required to implement those goals. Work with the School Committee/Administration, Budget Board and Town Administration to determine the cost/benefit of related proposals and to schedule implementation.
2. Evaluate student performance and ask the schools to provide a legitimate way to measure performance.
3. Support staff development through use of technology and performance measurement.
4. Elimination of schools unfunded liability (\$1,047,088)

New Programs (added 2007)

SEWER COMMISSION/WWTF

Ongoing Programs

1. Sewer Commission to compile a legitimate capital needs program report (5-10 year estimates)
2. Meet with the Sewer Commission

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Establish plan/financial program to address the possibility that the Sewer Commission will be required to upgrade their facilities.

GENERAL ATTITUDE – STANDARDS

General Policy

Town employees should respect each other, work together, always work to improve standards and accountability. Our organizational objective is to interact constructively with each other, our residents, visitors and the commercial sector of the Town. Look to give a positive, friendly and constructive response, when performing our duties. Respond back to the all those with inquiries, complaints, etc. in a timely manner and advise what action the Town has taken. Please give an explanation if we cannot be of service.

New Programs (added 2007)

TOWN MANAGER/TOWN COUNCIL

Ongoing Programs

1. Joint meeting with school committee & school administration to go over short and long term education plan and school funding (possible inclusion of the Budget Board as it relates to school funding).
2. Need to create a master recreation plan for school/town sports and recreation programs.
3. Look at options to hire a grant writer/consultant for administrative utilization – not a staff position or new job.
4. Continue to acquire land for public use and open space/recreation needs.
5. Maintain RIPTA bus routes and advocate for a Northern RI (Regional) transportation system
6. Continued opposition to Blackhawk Helicopter Project at Buck Hill

New Programs (added 2007)

1. A thorough understanding of the long term impacts of the new tax cap legislation needs to be fully understood by the Council.
2. Adopt general meeting rules for the Town Council.

LOCAL ORDINANCES

Ongoing Programs

1. Consider a local tax incentive program for commercial/retail and mixed use buildings within the redevelopment districts and/or target neighborhood areas.
2. Review existing tax incentive program for new businesses.

New Programs (added 2007)

1. Consider Park Ordinance: to consider policies for part-time closings, fees for violation, park closing times, etc.
2. Comprehensive review zoning ordinance.
3. Consider adoption of Affordable Housing Subsidy Ordinance – to make a better nexus between the town's zoning ordinances and comprehensive plan as they relate to mandated affordable housing

ZONING, PLANNING & LAND USE – LOCAL LAWS

Ongoing Programs

1. The Town's Off-Street Parking Ordinance §30-156 needs to be amended to focus on areas where higher density growth and utilities already exist.

New Programs

MAJOR LITIGATION

Ongoing Litigation

1. Gravel road – Western Hill Gravel (North Smithfield)
2. Northern Welding
3. Northern RI Private Industry Council
4. Piette Gravel Business

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Priority # **ZAMBARANO HOSPITAL** – Please keep the Town abreast of developments relative to the DCYF Proposal. Town Council opposes this project and any variation thereof. We would like to be a direct participant in any master-planning project that is being coordinated for the future viability or use of the Hospital or the site.

Notes

Priority # **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** - If any other Cities and Towns file progressive or innovative legislation, intended to enhance their (or the state's) economic development programs, please notify the Town Manager.

Notes (MCW) **Please try and watch for changes to the Historic Tax Credits and any Eminent Domain legislation that would weaken the Town's or Redevelopment Agency's ability to address our blighted and sub-standard areas.**

Priority # **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
Please support any restructuring of State Government and/or the Economic Development Corporation, which will facilitate a closer working relationship and more coordination with cities and towns. The state should assist local government whenever possible to retain and encourage expansion within the host community before looking at alternative sites within the state. Everyone agrees that keeping existing business and industry in Rhode Island verses their relocation to other states is important, but the host community should be given every opportunity to retain their companies and offered assistance and resources to accomplish this task whenever possible.

Notes

Priority #

HIGH-SPEED TELECOMMUNICATIONS

An important factor for the business community to consider when relocating to areas such as Burrillville is the availability of high-speed, efficient communications networks, especially high-tech companies. Towns like Burrillville are being by-passed when high-speed telecommunications networks are being built. We need to be on equal footing with other Cities and Towns if we are to balance our growth (long-term) and remain competitive.

Notes (MCW)

There really has to be some competition brought into Rhode Island to compete against Cox Cable -not only for residential uses, but to provide cost effective options for government, business and industry.

Priority #

STATE AID – RIGL §45-13-13

In effect, this law forced Burrillville to absorb the total amount of OSP PILOT monies into our calculations for school/town financial aid formulas. Effectively, this law resulted in the State's contribution toward school housing aid dropping by 20% or approximately \$300,000 (close to 50 cents on the tax rate). **Repealed by P.L. 2005, ch. 117, art. 13, § 10, effective July 1, 2005.** No similar law should be implemented in the future.

Notes (MCW)

There may be an effort by Municipal Affairs to roll back some of the financial benefit (State aid) the Town received as a result of the repeal of §45-13-13. State aid (particularly school construction aid) could be adversely affected if this is not caught early.

Priority #

Elimination of school mandates is important in these difficult financial times. Mandates rarely accomplish their intended objective and the funds originally targeted or set aside for these

programs should be freed up so that each school district can determine the best use of its financial resources based on their own individual priorities.

Notes (MCW)

“No Child Left Behind” is not a program that appears to have any meaningful benefit to schools (or Towns) other than to raise the cost of education. These provisions should be carefully scrutinized if the State is asked to legislate pieces of this Federal program. State aid should be increased to compensate for mandated spending increases associated with this and similar laws.

Priority #

SCHOOL DEPARTMENTS’ BUDGET APPEALS – Several years ago legislation almost passed which would have effectively allowed School Committees to bypass local budget authorities (Town Councils, Town meetings, etc.) and appeal their final budget to a public official in the Commissioner of Education’s Office. This abrogates all local taxpayers’ rights and effective control over their own local tax levies. This law must not be enacted in any form or variation.

Notes (MCW)

Support appropriate legislation to repeal “Caruolo ” or to modify the legislation to comply with the new tax cap legislation

Priority #

SCHOOL AID – OUTSTANDING TUITION PAYMENTS – The Town of Burrillville is owed money in unpaid tuition payments from other Cities and Towns relating to special education placements. FY2005 State Education Aid distributions should be modified/adjusted or a special appropriation authorized to compensate those of us who “front” our taxpayers’ money to pay for and educate other City and Town students and are not reimbursed by the host communities. The current process to

determine reimbursements from prior years is time consuming and requires the affected Towns to pay additional legal expenses to recuperate our own money!

Notes

The Town Council shares the School Department's concerns related to the status of group home aid. The result of current policy is that communities that block the placement of group homes are fiscally rewarded. This public policy discussion needs to assure communities that accept group homes and nonresident students do not suffer financial losses as a result.

Priority #

POLICE – BILL OF RIGHTS –

Notes (MCW)

Please oppose any statewide police unions' efforts to file new legislation that grants additional rights to the Police Officers' Bill of Rights process or that further erodes the ability of local Police Chiefs/Cities and Towns to manage their personnel.

Priority #

NORTHERN RI PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL – The Town and the seven other municipalities may wish to file legislation to relieve our communities of the financial burden this bankrupt agency has generated. Those communities are: Smithfield, North Smithfield, Woonsocket, Lincoln, Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Cumberland.

Notes

If any one of the other communities file related or similar legislation, Burrillville wishes to be included.

Priority #
HIGHEST

EXCISE TAX PHASE OUT –It is possible that monies needed to compensate the Cities and Towns for the revenue losses will not be available as the phase out timetable nears its end. We do not believe it is appropriate to cut back or reduce these funds because it simply shifts the tax burden from the State to cities and towns.

Notes (MCW)

Continued tax cuts associated with this program are strongly recommended.

Priority #

TOWN RIGHT OF WAYS AND UTILITY POLES- Please write legislation to shift the financial burden of moving utility infrastructure within town owned right of ways from the cities and towns to the utility companies.

Notes

When municipalities undertake road/sidewalk work, we frequently encounter problems with the location of utility poles and the wires, cables, etc. that are on these poles. Many times the poles are located such that reasonable construction standards and regulations such as ADA compliance cannot be achieved without relocating the poles, etc. The poles, etc. are usually within Town owned rights of ways.

The cost (charges) to relocate these facilities is astronomical and the process is very time consuming and cumbersome. We would like to know why municipalities must bear this excessive cost, especially when laws such as the ADA regulations may require us to move these facilities.

Charges for these relocation projects seem extremely high. Fees and charges should be based on reasonable, verifiable estimates of the actual cost for the service provided. It might be prudent to investigate how these charges are determined and who guards against potential abuses.

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Priority # **PASCOAG RESERVOIR** – Track activities related to past litigation.

Notes

Priority # **NATIONAL CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS** –Cities and Towns should be able to recoup the costs to perform these checks from each applicant. Please file appropriate legislation.

Notes

RIGL 40-13.2-5

Priority # **UNCLAIMED PROPERTY** –Income from Town-held tangible and intangible property should belong to the City or Town, not the State. Please file appropriate legislation.

Notes

RIGL 33-21.1-14.1

Priority # **MTBE** Please continue to support removal of MTBE from Rhode Island gasoline suppliers and to oppose any federal measures that would limit or eliminate the liability of manufacturers of MTBE.

Notes

Senate Bill 2007 S0060 introduced by Sen. Fogarty on 1/17/07; referred to Senate Environment and Agriculture (no hearings scheduled as of 2/7/07)

Priority # **Affordable Housing**
This has the potential to be a very significant issue for the town. Burrillville has many acres of vacant land that can be targeted by developers intent on taking advantage of the existing laws allowing comprehensive permits.

Notes (MCW) **The Town should oppose any legislation that would allow developers to by-pass the local planning and/or zoning authorities.**

The Low & Moderate Income Housing Act allows private developers to use comprehensive permits or a similar process to construct housing that differs from a Town's zoning, land use and affordable housing plans. Repealing the law is the appropriate position in order to protect the Town's property owners' rights.

Priority # **New Tax Cap Legislation (RIGL §44-5-2 – Maximum Levy)**

S 3050 – Property Tax Legislation. This legislation became law this past year. While the intent cannot be questioned, there are certain aspects that are problematic and/or undefined sufficiently to make a determination as to whether they are concerns. Issues include:

- a. Non-consideration of normal valuation growth
- b. Determination of what type of expenditure will qualify for exception and, if qualified, what amount will be allowable.

Notes (MCW) **A thorough understanding of the short and long-term impacts of the new tax cap legislation needs to be fully understood. I believe significant changes to the exiting law are required to allow the law to be implemented without unnecessary consequences.**

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Priority # **Education**
Repeal any State laws that are deemed to be more restrictive than federal legislation.

Notes

Priority # **Education**
Codify State education funding.

Notes (MCW) **If this is consideration for a statewide school funding formula, all involved should think long and hard about this. It may sound good on paper but there are very serious negatives, especially for Town services.**

Priority # **Education**
Introduce legislation that calls for one state-wide teachers' contract.

Notes

Priority # **Legislation Related to Delinquent Taxes**
Ask legislators to introduce a bill that would tie municipal tax accounts to a State process, thereby prohibiting delinquent taxpayers, or those allowing their property to go to tax sale, from acquiring State licenses or other benefits

Notes We need to stop land speculators or owners of questionable property, e.g. potential Brownfields sites, dams, ponds or blighted/contaminated buildings from deliberately not paying

taxes and/or from attempting to pass these properties to a city or town via the tax taking process

If State revocations of privileges were included in the penalties for non-payment of taxes at the local level, some benefit may be derived. The larger problem must still be addressed.

Priority # **RIGL §32-6: Recreation Immunity**

Notes The legislators are requested to inform the Town should legislation be introduced that would make it easier to get a judgment against the municipalities.

Priority # **Enabling Legislation – Sewer Commission**

Notes Consider amending the enabling legislation that empowers the Burrillville Sewer Commission so that the Town Council has a role in setting or approving sewer assessments (betterment rates).

Priority # **RIHEBC [16-7-44]** – This is a law that was passed which mandates financing through RIHEBC of all school projects if a community wants to get interest reimbursement. The Town went through this process this past year. We believe that there should still be an option for communities rated A or better [with any of the three primary rating agencies] to pursue selling their

bonds on the open market and still be entitled to the interest reimbursement from the State.

- a. With the exception of some economy of scale on the issuance costs, there was no significant benefit to the process.
 - i. There was no financial benefit achieved by combining the issues with other communities because the rate ended up being the same as the Town's.
 - ii. The Town still incurred some bond counsel costs for the review of the documents.
- b. The community is still unable to time the sale of their bonds with their project because RIHEBC determines the sale date. This can mean increased costs due to temporary borrowing.
- c. Although we do not anticipate going to market in the near future, do we want to consider the local sponsorship of a bill this year that would be similar to past recommendations in that the option to participate in the RIHEBC process or not.

Notes

Priority #

Joint and Several Liability Law.

- a. In recent legislative sessions there have been bills which sought to change the joint and several liability law.
- b. Basically it attempts to address the "deep pocket" view of communities when suits are handed out.
- c. Currently, if a municipality is only 1% liable it can still be held 100% liable for the damages because the other parties don't have money/assets.
- d. Additionally there are situations where the \$100,000 limitation statute holds for the community but not for the officials and/or employees. If a community indemnifies the official/employee, it then becomes liable for damages in excess of \$100,000 awarded against officials/employees.

Notes

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- Priority #** **Statutory interest rates** - The statutory citation [Section 9-21-10] is attached.
- a. There have been bills sponsored in recent years, which sought to reduce the amount of interest paid on awards.
 - b. The current problem is that the interest rate is 12% so it is to the benefit of suing parties to wait as long as possible to file and settle their cases because the interest accumulation is substantial. The 12% rate was established in the early 1980's when inflation was high. The intent is to either decrease the rate to a more representative amount such as 6% or, better yet, tie it in with the current rate of Treasury Bills so that the matter doesn't need to be readdressed in the future.

Notes

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- Priority #** **Tax Sale process**
Recent legislation has placed more reporting and notification mandates on the tax sale process which will lead to more costs being incurred by the property owner.

Notes